

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

8 January 1959

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SOVIET POSITION IN THE GENEVA NUCLEAR TEST TALKS

With the resumption of negotiations on 5 January after the Christmas recess, the Soviet delegate to the nuclear test talks in Geneva attacked a number of basic points in the Western position. He took issue on 6 January with Western insistence on majority rule in the proposed control commission, the position linking extension of a one-year test suspension with progress in other areas of disarmament, the proposal for giving any party the right to denounce the agreement when violated by another, and the concept of international staffing of the control posts to minimize use of nationals of the host state.

The Soviet delegation charged that further discussion of the control system would be premature and fruitless without prior agreement on these basic issues. The chief delegate urged settlement of these questions blocking progress of the conference. On 7 January the Soviet delegate charged that rigidity of the American position in not considering Soviet views, which could not be changed, forecast a gloomy outlook for the conference. He insisted that there could be no further discussion of any other issues until the question of duration of the treaty is resolved.

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These Soviet tactics follow the pessimistic statement made on 25 December before the Supreme Soviet by Foreign Minister Gromyko. Gromyko expressed strong doubts as to the possibility of agreement as long as the United States and Great Britain continue to raise such "invalid conditions" as their positions on duration of the agreement, on the link to other disarmament measures, and on voting in the control organ.

Gromyko also alleged that Western "demands and conditions" regarding inspection procedures "contradict" the conclusions of the Geneva experts' conference, which he claimed provided that a decision for dispatching an inspection team would be voted on each time a case of possible violation arose. He charged further that the Western position that nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes should be permitted after weapons tests are terminated is intended as a barrier to solution of the main task. He declared, however, that the USSR would agree to a limited number of explosions for peaceful purposes in order to defeat this alleged Anglo-American attempt to block agreement by insisting on such explosions.

The Soviet leaders remain unwilling to accept any system in which a Soviet veto or other Communist bloc vote could not block important decisions of the control organization, particularly with regard to dispatching an inspection team to the scene of any suspected violation. As long as the negotiations were moving ahead with drafting of the more noncontroversial articles of the treaty, Moscow preferred ignoring West-

ern "conditions." However, Western rejection before Christmas of the Soviet proposal to shelve the entire control issue by having a committee study it while the conference continued drafting other articles prompted Moscow to reintroduce its objections to the Western stand on duration and the link to other disarmament measures.

The Soviet leaders were probably concerned that a stalemate based on the sole issue of Soviet insistence on veto rights in the control commission would place Moscow in an unfavorable light in case of any breakdown in negotiations. They preferred, therefore, to stress these other areas of disagreement, making voting arrangements only part of the Soviet objection to the Western position.

Remarks made privately by the Soviet delegate prior to the Christmas recess and after mutual agreement on a draft article establishing a seven-nation commission suggest that Moscow may make the appearance of movement on the voting question to improve its weak position on this issue. Soviet delegate Tsarapkin suggested that the commission be composed of three Western states, three Eastern, and one neutral. Combined, for example, with a proposal for the necessity of a two-thirds vote in the commission, this suggestion of composition, while appearing to be more reasonable than insistence on veto powers, would preserve Soviet power to frustrate future actions of the control organ. The present Soviet stand in the conference sessions, however, continues to insist on unanimity of the "three founding parties" on all important decisions of the commission.

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Introduction by the United States of new technical information which would require some changes in the conclusions drawn at the Technical Conference last summer with regard to underground explosions was attacked by Moscow as an effort to nullify an agreement already reached. The Soviet delegate charged that any modification of technical conclusions would be the task of the commissions

when established and was not the proper subject matter for political talks. Soviet propaganda charged that a White House statement issued shortly after the information was introduced in the conference was an obvious effort to complicate the discussions at Geneva in an attempt to block agreement.

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